



# Virginia Beach Emergency Management Update

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## Va. Beach Emergency Management Update

*Va. Beach Emergency Management Update* is a newsletter published by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to foster inter-organizational and public awareness of emergency management issues and activities within the city. True emergency management is the community's commitment to planning for emergencies and disasters.

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## CERT Graduation



On June 28 Virginia Beach's first CERT class graduated. Twenty-four volunteers completed a nine-class program that began June 3. Classes met on Tuesday and Thursday nights with a few Saturdays thrown in. The program culminated in a practical disaster drill. Utilization of the USAR training site, fire burn building, and volunteer patients provided reality for taking the volunteers through their paces.

Some of the classes taught included: disaster preparedness, hazard familiarization, emergency medical training, terrorism awareness, search and rescue, psychology of disasters, and fire fighting. The program was based upon the national CERT program with some changes to reflect the program goals for Virginia Beach.

The first class involved a learning experience in team development. Former Battalion Chief Mike Brown assisted in

the organization and introduction to working as a team. Team building was stressed throughout the program.

The CERT program is a city program sup-

ported by the Virginia Beach Fire Department and is part of the Virginia Beach Citizen Corps initiative. This initiative fosters volunteerism in support of emergency services. Mrs. Mary Russo, City Volunteer Coordinator, attended the graduation to welcome the new city volunteers. The program, while supported by Fire, also receives support from EMS and the Police Department.



***CERT team members going through their graduation practical exercise. After attending nine classes, the team was able to put their knowledge to the test. In their search of the disaster site, they found fires, disoriented patients, burn victims, and distraught family members.***

# Annual VA/NC Hurricane Evacuation Meeting

Several years ago the state's regional coordinators for Hampton Roads and northeast North Carolina decided that a meeting was needed between the emergency managers, state police, and the traffic departments of the two states to discuss hurricane evacuations. This meeting, held at the beginning of the hurricane season, has become a regular event hosted by each state in alternate years.

The common denominator for this meeting involves the interrelationship between the evacuation of North Carolina and the Hampton Roads area. Almost 70% of North Carolina's evacuating population wants to head in the direction of Hampton Roads. A major concern is having North Carolina and Virginia

trying to evacuate at the same time and the impact that it will have on Virginia's traffic. Even if we are not evacuating, Chesapeake is impacted significantly by North Carolina's evacuation. The understanding that has evolved is that if we are in the midst of an evacuation, North Carolina's traffic will be rerouted to the west at the Barco intersection.

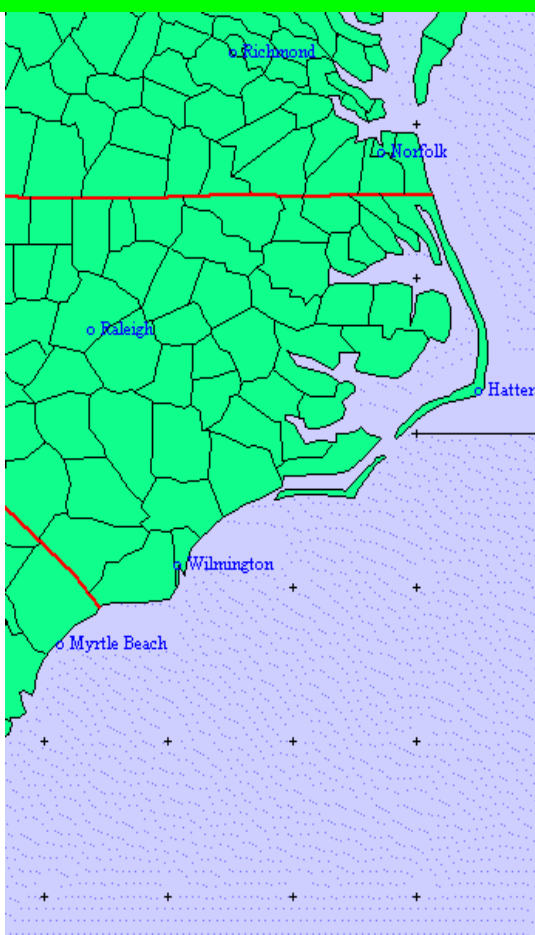
At this meeting, emergency management and public safety officials from both states received briefings from the National Weather Service (NWS), FEMA, respective emergency management agencies, state police, state DOTs, and the consultant conducting the hurricane evacuation study. The following are some of the issues that were discussed during this meeting:

- The NWS discussed their new five-day hurricane forecast in detail and in particular, how to use the information. The NWS also introduced the new digital weather data that is available.
- Post, Buckley, and Shue's representative discussed the ongoing hurricane studies in Hampton Roads and North Carolina.
- The Virginia Department of Emergency Management reported that they are working on a number of exercises.
- Many agencies reported that existing policies remained the same.

## Hurricane Risks and Probabilities

One perspective of hurricanes is that provided by the probabilities and the mean return times that come from various sources. The annual probability for a hurricane hitting our segment of coast in at least one source was 2%. Other approaches indicate that hurricane force winds should be felt several times over a 20-year period. This year's WAVY hurricane chart has a section that looks at mean return times for the various categories of hurricanes at various coastal locations.

The mean return times report that such events can be expected along certain time periods. As history shows, it is possible to have random events. Hampton Roads' two storms of record were in 1933 and 1936. If we were to go by the mean return times, they should have been 40 years apart. The charts to the right show something of the relative risk of storms along the southeast coast.



### Hurricane Mean Return Times

#### Category 1

Norfolk.....	15 yrs
Hatteras.....	5
Cape Lookout.....	8
Wilmington .....	10
Myrtle Beach .....	9

#### Category 2

Norfolk.....	43 yrs
Hatteras.....	11
Top Sail .....	19
Wilmington.....	24
Myrtle Beach .....	21

#### Category 3

Norfolk.....	84 yrs
Hatteras.....	20
Top Sail .....	36
Wilmington .....	43
Myrtle Beach .....	35

#### Category 4

Norfolk.....	210 yrs
Hatteras.....	47
Top Sail .....	85
Wilmington.....	96
Myrtle Beach .....	72

#### Category 5

Norfolk.....	500 yrs
Hatteras.....	140
Top Sail .....	240
Wilmington .....	250
Myrtle Beach .....	180

## Public Utilities Coordination Planning

The lessons learned from Hurricane Bonnie lead the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) to bring together the region's Public Works agencies, who have the responsibility for debris removal, to look at regional coordination opportunities. The resulting work lead to a planning document that defined state-of-the-art debris management practices. The ultimate product was the creation and awarding of a regional contract for debris removal. This planning process further involved coordination among public and private utilities. It was determined that the planning process started with debris and would transition to public utilities coordination. Once again, Virginia Beach stepped forward and provided a committee chair, Phil Davenport, and an emergency management representative, Mark Marchbank, to work with Gary Schuchardt, HRPDC Regional Emergency Planner, in supporting a committee of public utility representatives.

The original Public Works Committee had to be reorganized to allow for the change in the focus to public utilities.



ties. For the purpose of this planning process, the definition of public utilities included: water systems, waste water systems, storm water, electric power, natural gas, telecommunications, wireless communications, and cable systems. The primary goals were to bring together the following regional stakeholders: local jurisdictions, quasi-governmental agencies, state, private sectors, and federal agencies. The committee was able to bring to the table many of these agencies and the planning process focused on issues related to a coordination plan among these agencies. Some of the planning issues discussed included situations affecting planning, assumptions about planning, concepts of operations, and organizations and responsibilities. The planning also included the creation of a contact list, collection of public service announcements, and listings of critical facilities.

The planning document will be presented to the Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee (REMTAC) for the approach to take to the HRPDC MPO organization.

## Amateur Radio Field Day



**Mayor Oberndorf reads a proclamation proclaiming Amateur Radio Week at the Field Day Opening Ceremonies at Great Neck Park on June 28.**

Emergency management is about many groups coming together to work together in an emergency. One group that is critical in the city's preparedness is the ham radio operators. The local radio group has hundreds of members who can assist the community in the event of a disaster with communication needs. They have a local group, Virginia Beach ARES, whose goal is to support emergency services needs. In June of each year radio groups around the country have what is called Field Day. The event involves setting up multiple communications points to practice making contact with other operations all over the county.

Radio operators, using different equipment, setups, and configurations, set up their operations at Great Neck Park and began a 24-hour period of communications. In a real emergency, the ham radio operators are tasked with several missions. Some will come to the EOC to provide backup communications to other EOCs and to the state EOC. Other ham radio operators are asked to go to emergency shelters to provide them with back-up communications. Other such assignments might be made in an emergency and they may also be asked to support needs after a disaster. The hams are also part of the National Weather Service's SKYWARN program. They receive weather spotter training to help them identify severe weather and report it to the NWS to support their operations. They are also instrumental in providing communications in support of many outdoor events in the city.

**Virginia Beach ARES members work off of several ham radio setups as part of a Field Day simulation of emergency conditions.**



# Citizen Corps Council



The Virginia Beach Citizen Corps Council (VBCCC) con-

tinues to meet to support the City's commitment to emergency services volunteerism and emergency preparedness. The Citizen Corps is one of the strategies that the city employs to address the goals of "feeling safe any place any time." Towards this goal, the VBCCC will foster volunteerism that supports the community's emergency preparedness and will be an advocate of emergency preparedness messages

that stress the importance of disaster preparedness.



Neighborhood Watch and creating new programs such as a Virginia Beach Medical Reserve Corps is being considered. As always, the efforts to engage citizen volunteers in the area of emergency services is a city-wide goal of EMS, Fire, and Police.



Another group Virginia Beach brought to the table early was the amateur radio group. This group



has recently joined the national groups affiliated with the National Citizen Corps.

Another area of work for the VBCCC will deal with emergency preparedness information for the community.

The VBCCC is currently engaged in a strategic planning process being supported by the Organizational Development Office. Betty Wade Perry has been meeting with the group to define this new working group and is helping them to determine their goals and objectives in this area. This work will better define the VBCCC's relationship to the overall emergency preparedness and response organization.

## Medical Reserve Corps

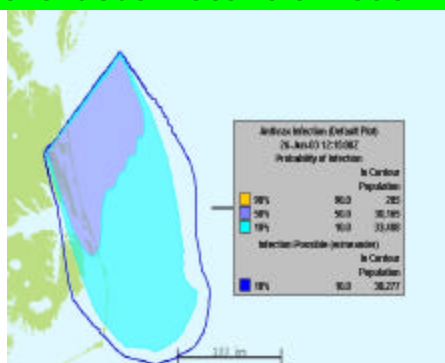
One of the national citizen corps programs is called the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The idea behind the MRC is that medical volunteers might be needed during an emergency to meet the demands of a mass terrorist attack or other public health emergency. Last year, the Health Department submitted a grant to support the creation of a MRC in Virginia Beach; however, the grant was not funded. This year the grant opportunity arose again and Public Health is putting together a proposal. Support from the local medical society has already been identified.



This year, with the creation of the Citizen Corps Council and success of the CERT program, the Citizen Corps Council and the CERT programs have established strong track records that will hopefully support our applications. The most pressing need is to identify volunteers to support a smallpox emergency. Such medical volunteers could support the medical staffing needs of the numerous distribution centers that would be needed to inoculate the city's population.

## Hazard Prediction and Assessment Capability (HPAC) Hazardous Materials Modeling

Pictured to the right is a computer generated map of an anthrax release in the southern part of Virginia Beach from an airplane. This map and maps like this are generated by the Navy daily as part of their training. In the past, this information was not allowed to be shared with officials outside of the Navy due to regulations. The United States Navy, Coast Guard, and regional emergency responders were able to



work out an agreement to allow emergency responders access to this information. Over the last several months, officials have been able to see this product and the evaluation of various chemicals and biological releases in Hampton Roads and around the country. In the event of a real emergency, this information can be made available to local jurisdictions to assist in a chemical or biological emergency response.

# Hazardous Materials Plan

The City of Virginia Beach, based upon the legislative mandates of the SARA Title III legislation, is mandated to have a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). This committee exists to ensure the city is in compliance with the governing legislation. The legislation has several components. The central component requires that a hazardous materials plan be maintained for the community that documents the risk of chemical emergencies and provides the public with access to this information, if requested.

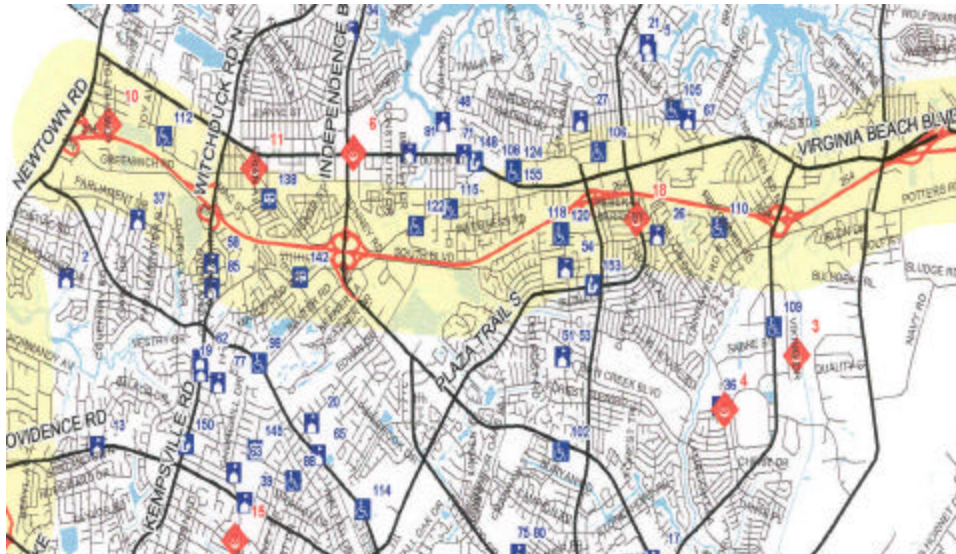
Our main planning focus is to identify all facilities that house extremely hazardous substances (EHSs), as defined by the SARA legislation. Each year facilities are required to report to the Fire Department and the LEPC the type and amount of hazardous substances that they have had on hand for the previous year. Information is then collected by the Fire Department with regards to the hazards and individual situations dealing with these facilities. This information is incorporated into the Hazardous Response Emergency Plan. Over the years, Virginia Beach has monitored the EHS substances reported. The general assessment is that Virginia Beach is a fairly clean community with regards to the presence of ESH chemicals. In past years, chlorine was the most prevalent chemical and presented the greatest planning challenge.

Changes in technology and usage have removed this risk from our community. In 2003 the most common ESH chemical was sulfuric acid found in certain telecommunications sites. This chemical has a rather small evacuation zone associated with its release.

Over the years, OEM has depended upon ComIT's GIS operations to support the planning process for this hazard. Maps of each of the sites were prepared with the evacuation zones based upon the chemical present. From these maps facilities with life threatening hazards near the

facility could be easily identified. A master map pictured in the center is an example of their support. Listed on this map are the city's 20 plus EHS facilities, critical facilities that might be impacted by a release, schools, hospitals, campgrounds, and recreational facilities. In terms of emergency planning, these facilities indicate an easily identifiable life risk.

GIS is an emergency planning tool that has great promise. GIS has been supportive of this role and many more applications can be approached that ties the strength of the GIS technology to the needs of emergency management. In the future, new surge maps will become available from which to re-evaluate the threat of hurricanes based upon the ongoing Hurricane Evacuation Restudy.



***Pictured is a portion of a GIS generated map for the City of Virginia Beach. It identifies EHS facilities as defined by SARA Title III legislation. Also identified are at-risk facilities that might be impacted by a chemical release.***



## Local Conferences

The following are some conferences and training opportunities related to emergency management:

**VEMA Conference**  
**Richmond, Virginia**  
**August 15-17**

<http://www.vemaweb.org/prodev/>



The Virginia Emergency Management Association will be holding an annual meeting in August of this year. A day-long training session is held along with a business meeting. The training sessions will include presentations on the following: Schools Crisis Management, Search and Rescue Operations, Business Crisis Planning.

**Virginia Hazmat Conference**  
**Virginia Beach, Virginia**  
**September 25-27**

<http://www.vaemergency.com/hazmatconf03/03hazmatconf>.

The annual Virginia Hazardous Materials Conference will be held in Virginia Beach. This conference has been held in Virginia Beach for a number of years. This conference has a strong reputation and is extremely well attended by emergency responders along the east coast. The conference offers a diverse package of workshops that can provide information from a number of needs not necessarily haz mat.



**EPA**  
**Emergency Preparedness Conference**  
**Norfolk, Virginia**  
**November 17-19**  
<http://www.2003conference.org>



Norfolk will play host to the EPA Region III Emergency Preparedness Conference. The conference will address haz mat issues and will also host programs in a number of other areas. Cyberterrorism and FEMA's homeland security programs are scheduled workshops.

The conference will also have some unique training as part of its pre-conference activities. The highly regarded Dupont Street Chemistry Program will be presented and plans are to conduct the CSX Incident Command Workshop.



The new Department of Homeland Security has established its new logo. The reorganization of agencies under the umbrella of homeland security has resulted in the movement of many agencies under the Department of Homeland Security. Of interest to emergency management is FEMA's status. FEMA's place in this new organization is under one of the five directorates of the Department of Homeland Security. Emergency preparedness will be under the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate. The exact fate of FEMA's name is unclear at this time. Another emergency management information source is the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

## Department of Justice (DOJ) Equipment Grants

### DOJ Equipment Grants

The City of Virginia Beach has been awarded two competitive Grants under the DOJ Equipment Grant Program. At the beginning of the year, the city was given a \$230,000 grant to purchase equipment to support homeland security efforts. In addition to these funds, the city was able to submit competitive grants for individual, as well as a regional grant. Based on the work completed by the DOJ Equipment Committee a grant for the purchase of a bomb robot was endorsed by the group along with a cooperative grant between Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. The robot grant was for \$100,000 and the regional grants were for \$230,000. These funds will purchase equipment to support trench rescue operations. This committee will soon be looking at how the city will use the \$230,000 next year. The equipment categories have been expanded and the committee will need to consider the overall homeland security needs.

### Communications Interoperability

Another homeland security goal deals with grant activities in the area of communications interoperability. Grants in this area are meant to address the difficulties that exist with communications between agencies, jurisdictions, and the different levels of government. In a large scale terrorism event many agencies will come together with different types of radio systems. The city has been invited to be the lead agency in putting together a regional strategy for communications interoperability. ComIT has put together a team of public safety agencies to compile the information necessary to be included in this grant. There are also other grants concerning this issue.